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## 6 Protest against Equalizing the Regium Donum. [July.

a few others have supposed them to have been the residence of anchorite monks; while some possessed of what we may (without being accused of ill-nature) call *vigorous imaginations*, laying aside common sense, boldly enter the labyrinth of etymology, and assert them to have been reared by the Phenicians for fire-altars! That is, places where they say the Magi kept the sacred fires from which all others were kindled, at May, and Hallow-eve; all other fires, according to these authors, being extinguished at such periods.

A late essayist has given us a pretty sufficient portion of romance on the antiquity of our stone-buildings, particularly our Round Towers, which, he says, were built by the Phenicians for fire-temples! After which strange assertion, and some weak attempts at irony, against those who disbelieve such whimsies, he exultingly exclaims, "Let those authors descend into our subterranean caves, and they shall find them well built with ruble stone, or let them ascend into the second cave, in the Cave hill, near Belfast, and they will conclude, they shall have no occasion to run into forests or woods, to look for the principles of the Gothic arch." Notwithstanding this cavalier paragraph, in which doubtless he conceives to have pointed out some excellent *specimens* of our ancestor's skill in architecture, I believe I may safely affirm, that were the unbelievers of his system of antiquities to run to Cave-hill to examine those fine *samples*, the assembly held there on Easter Mondays would bear but a small proportion to their numbers.

Dunsea.

L.C.N.

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To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.

By inserting the following, which

I conceive to be somewhat curious, and well adapted for the perusal of many of your readers, you will much oblige one of your subscribers, and a constant peruser of your valuable magazine. L.

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*REASONS of Protest by the Rev. Mr. Lowry, of Clonane, against an overture for equalizing the Royal Bounty, introduced into the Synod of Burgher Seceders, met at Cookstown, July, 1810.*

1st. **R**EASON.—This overture is contrary to the nature of a Spiritual court. Tending to infringe upon the properties of others, and thereby destroying the civil rights of society.

2d.—Because such an overture is a breach of the tenth commandment, originating in covetousness; for though some in the first class may approve of it, their approbation can no more sanction it, than the suicide's conduct sanction self-murder, both transgressing God's law, by an infringement on their own rights.

3d.—Because such an overture, in an assembly wherein all are not on a level in the subject matter of the overture, is unfair. Those in the inferior classes judging and voting from interested motives.

4th.—Because such an equalization intended by the overture, doth not tend to spread the gospel, but to increase the wealth of some, at the expense of others, a vote having been carried in a former day for a voluntary subscription for said purpose of spreading the gospel.

5th.—Because this overture expresses, in subordination to the civil rulers, disaffection to the laws of the land, *in this case*. "It now being an ordinance of man, demands submission for the Lord's sake."—I. Peter, 2.—13.

6th.—Admit the principle of e-

qualizing temporal personal property, why not equalize stipend, real estate, goods, chattels, &c.? Such a principle is contrary to reason and religion, and is the introduction of anarchy and confusion.

7th. Reason.—Admitting, for argument's sake, the propriety of the overture, it must be acknowledged to be an overture of importance, the discussion of it should have been postponed for a year, according to a rule read to that effect at the opening of the Synod.

These reasons of protest, I claim to have inserted in my own name, and in the name of all who may adhere.

JOHN LOWRY, *Clonane.*

To which protest, Messrs. Dixon, Sand-holes,—Brown, Six-mile cross,—Muirhead, Loughaghry,—Reid, Drumbanagher,—and M'Auley, Ballybay, Ministers, adhered.

*The above is truly copied from the minutes of said meeting, in the hands of the Clerk of the Burgher Synod.*

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*To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.*

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THE following account of the village of Blackstaff; is extracted from the "Statistical Survey of the County Monaghan;" as it is far from being generally known, I hope you will deem it worthy of insertion.

S.M.S.

"IT may not be unacceptable, to say a few words of the quondam village of Blackstaff, which is now no more. This village was composed of about two hundred miserable cabins, and its site was in the centre of five hundred acres of a range of bog, heath, and immense rock, which altogether had as gloomy and forbidding a view, as could be presented to the eye; the district around these habitations was so wretched, so lately as ten

years ago, that it had never been attempted to be cultivated; and the poor people who inhabited them, each had then a very limited portion of land, at a considerable distance from Blackstaff.

"A curious law prevailed in this village for centuries, and was always implicitly attended to, until the colony were dispersed, and their huts levelled. On a particular day, annually, all the inhabitants met together, and chose from amongst themselves, a mayor or chief magistrate, to whom was intrusted the care of the village, and he was intrusted with due power and authority to maintain order and proper conduct amongst his fellow-citizens. This potentate decided all quarrels and disputes, and there never was an instance known of an appeal from his decree, so impartially was justice administered. The only qualification for this office was the largest potato-garden, whose occupier was sure to be elected mayor. His fees of office, on any application, was a bottle of *Whiskey* which he always invited the disputants to partake of with him, that he might see them friends again; and it so happened, whether from the little quarrels of his neighbours, or their love for conviviality, so much of his time had to be devoted to the joys of the bottle, that his potato garden was neglected during his mayoralty, and never was there an instance of his enjoying it for two successive years. It is not a little extraordinary, that so implicit an obedience was paid to his decisions, that the neighbouring magistrates had never any trouble from this quarter.

"The inconvenient distance of their habitations from their farms, and the danger of allowing so many many families in close compact in the late disturbed times, occasioned the necessity of dispersing them;